

13. Oct. 3.
CHRIST, *the Ransom Found.*

A
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the DEATH of

Mr. *John Davenport,*

Who departed this Life, *October 4th,*
Aged Forty-eight.

PREACHED *October 13. 1754.*

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By *JOHN GILL, D.D.*

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J O B, xxxiii. 24.

*Then he is gracious unto him, and saith,
deliver him from going down to the
pit, I have found a ransom.*

THE occasion of my reading these words to you at this time, is the decease of Mr. *John Davenport*, late member and deacon of this church; which by some circumstances were thought to be much upon his mind of late, and of singular use to him; and therefore were judged proper to be the subject of a funeral discourse.

The words are in strict connexion with those that immediately go before; *if there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious, &c.* that is, if there be a messenger with God; or with the sick man; who is described in the preceding verses, 19, 20, 21, 22. by the strong pain he is chastened with on his bed, with which all his bones are affected; by his nausea and ab-

horrence of food, even the most delicious and dainty; by the consumption of his flesh, being reduced to skin and bone, and so emaciated, that scarce any flesh is to be seen upon him, and his bones, which were covered with it, now stick out, and may easily be told; and by his near approach to the grave, and to the *destroyers*: not the destroying angels^a; rather destroying diseases; so *Broughton* renders it, *killing maladies*; or it may be the worms^b, which in the grave destroy the flesh that remains, see chap. xix. 26. or else *deaths*, the first and second, and the horrors and terrors of them^c. Now in such a case, and at such a season, if there be a proper, useful, assisting person at hand, it is well for the sick man; *if there be a messenger, or an angel*, as the word signifies: and some^d understand it of an angel by nature; one of those thousands, and ten thousands, that stand before God and minister unto him; one of those ministering spirits that are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation; who, as they perform good offices to them in life and health, so in sickness, and at the hour of death; when it is certain they are present with them, to take care of the separate spirit, and convoy it to heaven; and may be of use to suggest things comfortable to the mind of the sick person, and direct him

^a Aben Ezra, Alshech, R. Simeon Bar Tzemach in loc.

^b Bolduc. in loc.

^c Vid. Schultens in loc. The

Targum renders the word מִיתוּת death.

^d Targum,

Grotius, Mercerus, & alii.

him what is right for him in such circumstances. This sense the *Popish* interpreters greedily catch at; though should it be admitted, it would not follow, that because that angels may be of some use on sick-beds, and death-beds, that therefore they are to be invoked, prayed unto, and made use of as mediators between God and man; but I think this sense is to be rejected: and rather by the *messenger*, &c. is meant a minister of the word^e, who is by office an angel; hence we read^f of the angels of the seven churches, which are no other then the pastors of them; who have their mission and commission from God to preach the gospel: and such an one is an *interpreter* of the scriptures, which he studies rightly to divide and explain; and of the mind and will of God in them, which he is favoured with, and enlightened into: and a spiritual, evangelical and faithful dispenser of the word is *one among a thousand*, scarce and rare; there are but few such, especially in times of declension, and in such places where the word of the Lord is precious or rare; and very probably there were but few in those countries where *Job* and his friends lived, see *Eccl.* vii. 28. Now the business of such a one is *to shew unto man*, to any man, and particularly *האדם* the sick man, his *uprightness*, or *rectitude*, or *righteousness*;

^e Munster, Clarius, Codurcus, Bolducius, Junius and Tremellius, Caryll, and others.

^f Rev. i. 20.

teousness; either the righteousness of God in this dispensation of his providence; to inform him, that as God is righteous in all his ways and works, so in this; that it is in very faithfulness he has afflicted him, and therefore should not think hardly of God, or that he is hardly used by him; should not murmur and repine, but patiently submit to the will of God: or else the righteousness of the God-man and mediator Jesus Christ; that everlasting righteousness he has wrought out, and which is revealed in the gospel, and is a principal article of it; and therefore a proper part of a minister's work to shew it unto men: hence they are said to turn many to righteousness, or to justify many^s; that is, by pointing out and directing them to the righteousness of Christ, as the alone justifying one; and which, as it is the solid foundation of peace, joy, and comfort in life and health, it is most proper to be observed to the sick man drawing nigh to the gates of death; which is a righteousness that will answer for him in a time to come. Moreover, it is the business of a minister at such a time to shew the sick man what is *right* for him to do: if the sick man is stupid and insensible of his state and condition by nature; then he is to inform him that God made man upright, but he by sinning lost his uprightness; and this is not now to be found in men; but must be
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be had in another : he is to labour to convince him of the sin of his nature, and the sinfulness of his life and actions ; and to shew him the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the just demerit of it, eternal death and damnation, and the absolute necessity of repentance for it : if the sick man is a sensible man, and is depressed under a sense of sin, and the guilt of it, and under fearful apprehensions of wrath and ruin ; the minister is to set before him Christ, and him crucified ; he is to tell him of his blood, righteousness and sacrifice, and the efficacy of them to take away sin ; and to direct and encourage him to believe in Christ ; assuring him, that whoever believes in him shall be saved. Add to this, if the sick man is a good man, a truly gracious man, and yet has doubts and fears of his uprightness, and the truth of grace in him ; then, the minister observing that this is the fruit of unbelief, and of satan's temptations, is to do all he can to clear up this point to him, that he is truly a regenerated and converted man ; that he has truth in the inner part, and that the work of grace is begun, which will be performed in him : and this, as one ^b rightly observes, is the hardest work that the ministers of the gospel have, to make men understand and see their own uprightness : all this being done, *then he is gracious* ; the minister is gracious, has pity and compassion.

compassion on the sick man, and speaks of the grace of God to him, and makes a gracious supplication for him; (so someⁱ render the words) and prays in the following manner; "O Lord God, deliver this sick man
 " from going down to the pit, redeem his
 " life from destruction; for I find in the ever-
 " lasting gospel, there is a ransom or atone-
 " ment for sin provided for such persons."

But after all, I rather think, with others^k, that the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, is meant by the *messenger* or *angel*; who is the *angel* that went before the *Israelites* in the wilderness, in whom the name of the Lord was, who could, though he would not, pardon their iniquities; *the angel of God's presence*, who always appears before him, and introduces men into his presence, and thro' whom they enjoy it; and the *angel* or *messenger of the covenant*, who has confirmed it by his blood, and has revealed it more clearly in the gospel: who also is an *interpreter* of his Father's mind and will, with which he is thoroughly acquainted, lying in his bosom; or an *orator*, the essential word of God that spake for his people in council and covenant; their advocate with the Father, and the antitypical *Aaron*, that can speak well; having as man and mediator the tongue of the learned

ⁱ Junius & Codurcus. ^k Cocceius, Schmid. Joh. Henr. Michael & Schultens in loc. Vid. Witfii Oeconom. Federum, l. 2. c. 3. §. 3. p. 112. & l. 4. c. 3. §. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. p. 463, 464, 465.

learned given him to speak a word in season : and he is *one among a thousand* ; the chiefest among ten thousand, angels or men ; he has obtained a more excellent name, and is of a superior nature to angels, being their creator, Lord, and head ; and is higher than the kings of the earth ; there is none like unto him among all the creatures in heaven or earth, and to a believer he is all in all. And his office as a prophet is to shew unto men the uprightness or righteousness of God ; the strictness of his justice, what that requires, even perfect conformity to his law, and which is sufficiently declared by his propitiatory sacrifice ; and also his own uprightness or righteousness he has wrought out, and which he, by his Spirit, convinces men of their need of, and brings it near to them, and clothes them with it, as well as shews it unto God for them as their advocate ; and he also shews to them what is right and good for them to do, even to love mercy, do justice, and walk humbly with God : and then upon all this God is gracious ; he manifests his grace and love, and orders deliverance from ruin and destruction, even upon the foot of a ransom found and given ; and seeing there is with him such a divine person in office in favour of the sick man : for the particle *if*¹ does

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not

¹ *EN* si, non incertam nunc, sed contra certam & necessariam infert conditionem ; sine qua peccator iratum numen experiens, & jam morti primæ ac secundæ proximûs, a pernicio liberari nequit ; ergo non doctor intenditur, non angelus, sed Goel. *Schultens* in loc.

not denote any thing doubtful and uncertain, but is expressive of something certain, and infers it from it. In the words may be observed,

I. The great blessing of the text, *a ransom found.*

II. The happy effect and consequence of it, *deliverance from going down to the pit.*

III. The grace of God displayed herein, both in finding the ransom, and delivering from the pit upon it, *he is gracious and faithful.*

I. The great blessing of the text, *a ransom found.* Two things I shall consider under this head; 1st, who or what this ransom is; 2dly, the act of finding it, and to whom it is to be ascribed.

1st. Who or what this ransom is. A ransom is a price paid for the redemption of captives, or some satisfaction given upon which they are released. In such a state and condition by nature are the elect of God, and ransomed of the Lord; they are the prey of satan, and are led and detained captives by him at his will; they are brought into bondage by their sins and corruptions, and are held under the same; and they are shut up under the law, and liable to its condemnation and curse; now Christ is the ransom of them from all this. This will appear by a passage or two out of the New Testament, which

which will serve greatly to illustrate the text; for there is the same gospel in one testament as in the other, only it is in the old more covertly, and in the new more clear and express; and the one serves to open and explain the other. Our Lord, speaking of the Son of man, by whom he means himself, says ^m, *he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister*; not to be waited upon as a nobleman, prince or potentate, but to be a servant to others, and particularly *to give his life a ransom for many*; so that it is the life of Christ that is the ransom-price of men. Again, the apostle *Paul* says ⁿ of the man Christ Jesus the mediator, that he *gave himself a ransom for all*, ἀντίλυτρον, a ransom-price in the room and stead of all his people, Jews and Gentiles, *to be testified in due time*; as it has been most clearly thro' the ministration of the gospel; whence it is manifest that not riches, nor righteousness, nor repentance, nor prayers, nor alms-deeds, are the ransom of men, but Christ himself. Not riches. The *Israelites* indeed, when they were numbred, gave every one an half shekel for the ransom of their souls, which was called *atonement-money*^o; but then this was not a real, but a typical ransom; typical of the ransom of Jesus Christ; which is expressly denied to be *by corruptible things, as silver and gold*, but
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^m Matt. xx. 28.

ⁿ 1 Tim. ii. 6.

^o Exod. xxx. 12—16.

by his *precious blood*^p. Had a man ever so great riches, the riches of the *Indies*, or of the whole world, he would not be able to redeem himself or his brother, or *give to God a ransom* for either; for if once *wrath* goes forth from the Lord, and he *takes away with the stroke* of it, a *great ransom*, even a king's ransom *cannot deliver* from it; *for will be esteem thy riches, no not gold, nor all the forces of strength*^q: nor is a man's own righteousness, or his good works, a ransom for him; these are what God has a prior right unto before the performance of them, and therefore men cannot expect a recompence for them, or a ransom by them; for *who hath first given to him* (the Lord) *and it shall be recompensed to him again*^r? These are debts they owe to God, and when performed ever so well they do but their duty, and therefore can never pay off the old scores of sin by them, or thereby make atonement for them; these are not profitable to God, whatever they may be to men, and cannot merit any thing at his hand; and besides are exceeding imperfect and unacceptable to God of themselves; they are thrown out of man's acceptance with God, justification before him, and eternal salvation; and if there is no acceptance, justification and salvation by them, as we are sure from the word of God there is

^p 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.
18, 19.

^q Ps. xlix. 6, 7. Job xxxvi.
^r Rom. xi. 35.

is not, then they cannot be the ransom-price for the souls of men, or atone for their sins: nor is the ransom, repentance, tears and humiliation; for what satisfaction do these give to an offended being, to injured and inexorable justice, and to the righteous law of God? which those that sin against die without mercy, unless it is fulfilled, magnified, and made honourable: could men bring instead of *ten thousands of rivers of oil*, such a quantity of brinish tears, they would not wash away sin, or atone for it; still it would remain *marked* before God. Vain, stupid man! to imagine that his own tears will do what a Saviour's could not; for though *in the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears**; yet not these, but his blood were the ransom of souls. Nor are prayers and alms-deeds a ransom, though ever so well performed; these may *come up before God for a memorial* through the mediation of Jesus Christ, but not for a ransom or atonement, when done in faith, and from a principle of love, and to the glory of God; but for many of the prayers of men they do but *receive the greater damnation*, as the *Pharisees* of old; and a man may *bestow all his goods to feed the poor*, and yet not have *charity*, or the true grace of love, and be lost and perish; and if he had that grace, and did what he did from such a principle,
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* Heb. v, 7.

it would not atone for his sins, or be the ransom of his soul; no, this is Christ, and him only. The word here used comes from a root which signifies to *cover*^t, and is much the same in sound as our *English* word, which seems to come from it: the mercy-seat is called by this name, and indeed it was no other than a lid or covering to the ark, in which the law was, and exactly of the same measure with it; and was typical of Christ, who by his blood and righteousness covers all the sins of his people, their transgressions of the law of God; and by his sacrifice expiates them, or makes atonement for them, and so is the ransom of them. For the further illustration of this precious truth, I shall briefly shew you what that is which Christ has given as a ransom, which is sufficient; and for whom it is given.

1. What that is which Christ has given for the ransom of men: and from scripture it appears that it was his precious blood; for as redemption is always ascribed to the blood of Christ, as the procuring cause of it, that must be the redemption or ransom-price; and the apostle *Peter* is express for it; he says, *ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold—but with the precious blood* of

* Ex his de homine, & de Deo peccati condonationi quod suum est, conferente, exemplis eodem verbo utriusque actum exprimentibus apparet, כסף optime reddi per tegere & tegendo illiniendoque inducere ac delere. *Gusset. Comment. Ebr.* p. 398.

of *Christ* *; a price sufficient to purchase the whole church of God, to expiate all their sins, and ransom their souls from ruin; and therefore may well be called *precious blood*; blood of great price and value: hence under the law so much regard was had to blood; it was to be covered with dust, and was not to be eaten, because it made atonement for the soul, though but in a typical way; for not the blood of bulls and goats, but the blood of Christ is our real atonement and ransom-price. Again, from a text before-mentioned it is clear, that it is the life of Christ that was given for a ransom; he came to *give his life a ransom for many* †: life, than which nothing is more dear and valuable, and especially such a life as Christ's was; a life entirely at his own dispose, which another man's is not, and which he laid down, and took up again of himself; it was not forfeited by any act of his own, or forced from him by another; it was what he freely laid down, and voluntarily gave into the hands of men, justice and death, in the room and stead of his people; and as a ransom-price for them, his life for theirs: moreover, it is said to be himself that is this ransom; *who gave himself a ransom for all* ‡; and so it is often expressed, that he loved us, and *gave himself* for us, that he might redeem us; and *gave himself*,
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* 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

† Matt. xx. 28.

‡ 1 Tim. ii. 6.

an offering and a sacrifice, and *offered himself* without spot unto God^y, even his soul and body, his whole human nature; and this as in union with his divine person; which union ceased not when he became the ransom-price. And what is contained in this word *himself*, who can tell? this we may be sure of, it was a sufficient ransom, whereby the law was fulfilled, and justice satisfied: This is a full ransom or redemption from sin, from all sins original and actual, from all the demerit of them; and in consequence of this men are freed from the dominion and power of sin, under which they were held captives, and will be from the being of it; for Christ has by his atoning sacrifice finished and made an end of sin, and put it away for ever, and perfected them that are sanctified: it is a compleat ransom of them out of the hands of satan; *the Lord hath ransomed Jacob out of the hand of him that was stronger than he*^z; by virtue of this ransom the prey is taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive is delivered; and even captivity itself, or he that led others captive, is himself led captive by the saviour and redeemer of sinners. This is a plenary ransom from the law, its curse and condemnation; Christ has redeemed his that were under it from it, being made a curse for them; and suffering its sentence of condemnation to be executed on himself; and therefore

^y Tit. ii. 14. Eph. v. 2. Heb. ix. 14. ^z Jer. xxxi. 11.

therefore there is none to them that are in him; and they may boldly say, *who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died*^a; and by dying he gave his life a ransom for them, and so secured them from the curse and condemnation of the law. In a word, it is a full ransom from hell; and wrath, and the second death, to which men are liable thro' sin; Christ has even ransomed his people from the power of the grave, as a punishment from sin, and so as that they shall not be always detained in it; as well as has redeemed them from the second death, by which they shall never be hurt, and which shall never have any power over them; he has delivered them from wrath to come, and from going down to hell, or the pit of corruption. But I proceed to shew,

2. For whom this ransom is given. It is said to be given *for many*; even for as many as are ordained to eternal life; for as many as the Father has given to Christ; for those many for whom his blood has been shed for the remission of their sins; for those many whom he justifies by his knowledge, or by faith in his righteousness; for those many sons, he, the captain of their salvation, brings to glory; and these are a great number, which no man can number; and on account of which, as well as many other things, this ransom or redemption by Christ is called ^b a

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plenteous

^a Rom. viii. 1, 34.

^b Ps. cxxx. 7.

plentepus one, and lays a good foundation for hope in him: but then it is not for all men, or for every individual of mankind; for tho' he is said to give himself a ransom *for all*, it is not expressed for all men, or for every man; but the sense is, that he gave himself for all the chosen, or for men of all sorts, ranks and degrees, high and low, rich and poor; and for all sorts of sinners, for Gentiles as well as Jews, as the context shows^b: those that are ransomed and redeemed, are ransomed from among men, and are redeemed unto God by the blood of Christ, out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation; and cannot be all men, every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, or every individual of them^c: the ransomed ones are represented as a peculiar people, and have such characters ascribed to them as do not agree to all men; they are the church of God, the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, which are purchased by the blood of Christ; and they are his sheep, he has laid down his life, and given it as a ransom for: moreover, the ransomed of the Lord come to Zion with songs of everlasting joy, sooner or later, either to the church below, or to heaven above; to neither of which do all mankind come^d. Add to all this, that if the

^b 1 Tim. ii. 6. i. 2, 7.

^c Rev. xiv. 4. and v. 9.

^d Acts xx. 28. John x. 15. Is. xxxv. 10.

the ransom-price is paid for all, all would be ransomed, and so eternally saved, which is not true ; or else the ransom-price is paid in vain, which surely will not be said ; it reflecting so much dishonour on the justice of God, and the blood of Christ. The typical ransom-price under the law, the half-shekel, was paid for the ransom of the souls of *Israelites* only, and so is the real one ; tho' not for all *Israel* in a literal sense, because all were not *Israel* who were of *Israel*, only a remnant according to the election of grace ; it is the spiritual and mystical *Israel* of God whom he has chosen for his own peculiar people ; the whole *Israel* of God, or all his elect, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, that Christ is become a ransom-price for ; and who in consequence of it, thro' his spirit and grace, are *Israelites* indeed, in whom there is no guile. *God so loved the world* of the Gentiles, as to set and send forth his own son to be the propitiation or expiatory sacrifice for their sins ; and Christ is become *the propitiation, not for the sins* of the Jews only, or his elect among them, *but for the sins of the whole world* ; or for the sins of all his people throughout the whole world, even for the sins of all *the children of God that are scattered abroad*^a. This ransom-price, as the typical one, is given for the ransom of the soul ; it is that which has sinned, and is liable

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^a John iii. 16. and xi. 51, 52. 1 John ii. 2.

to death, the second death, or an eternal one ; it is for that most excellent part of man, and therefore to be most regarded ; and hence it requires so great a price ; *the redemption of the soul is precious*^e ; and nothing can ransom it but the blood of Christ ; and therefore it is so great a blessing as it is, to be ransomed, because it is no other than the redemption of the life or soul of man from destruction ; and this ransom-price, like the typical one, is paid equally for all alike ; every *Israelite* gave an half-shekel, *the rich did not give more, nor the poor less*^f ; the same price of Christ's blood is paid for one as for another ; for tho' some sins be greater than others, and some are greater sinners than others are, and are redeemed from more sins than others be, yet there is but one price paid for all ; for every sin being objectively infinite, requires an infinite price to be paid to make satisfaction and atonement for it, and which has been given ; hence all obtain the same precious faith, are justified by the same righteousness, and share in the same common salvation. And to add no more, this price is paid for them into the hands of God ; for it is against him that sin is committed, and who only can pardon it, and does upon the foot of satisfaction made : he is the law-giver, whose law is broken by sin, and must be fulfilled ; the judge of all the earth, whose justice must be satisfied, or
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^e Ps. xlix, 8.

^f Exod. xxx. 15.

he'll not clear the guilty ; and the creditor to whom men owe more than ten thousand talents, and have nothing to pay ; and therefore the price, by the surety, must be given into his hand to clear off the debt, and ransom from prison ; and accordingly Christ has given himself an offering and a sacrifice *unto God*, and has given to him a ransom for his people, and has *redeemed them unto him by his blood* ; and hence they shall certainly be saved by him, and in him, with an everlasting salvation. But I hasten to consider,

2dly, The act of *finding* this ransom, and to whom it is to be ascribed. If it respects the original scheme of it in eternity, as it seems to do, it was found out by God the Father ; who *laid help upon one that is mighty, exalted one chosen out of the people, found David his servant, and anointed him with his holy oil* ^h ; that is, he found his own son to be the most proper person to be the saviour and redeemer of his people ; one that was mighty, almighty, and so equal to the work of redemption ; and of all the individuals of human nature he designed to bring into being, which came into his vast and infinite mind, he chose out of them all one single individual of human nature, to be united to his own son in due time ; and so he invested him with the office of mediator ; and thus a ransom was found for men : and this is not the

§ Eph. v. 2. Rev. v. 9.

^h Ps. lxxxix. 19, 20.

the invention of angels, nor of men, but of God only; not of angels, for they knew nothing of the matter but by revelation; so far were they from having any concern in the finding it out, that when it was found, they were strangers to it until it was made known unto them; and whatever hint might be given them of it immediately from God himself, whose invention this is, previous to the fall of man, as some have thought; which occasioned a great part of them to leave their first estate, and become apostates, rather than be subject to Christ in human nature; yet it seems as if great part, at least, of their knowledge of this affair, is attained to by them thro' the church of God and the ministry of the word in it; since it is said¹, *to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known* (that is made known) *by the church, the manifold wisdom of God*; that wonderful wisdom of God in finding out a ransom for men: yea, it looks as if their knowledge of it was not yet perfect, or however that they have not fully satisfied themselves with it, but take fresh pleasure in the contemplation of it; for it is said², *which things the angels desire to look into, even yet more and more*; they bow their heads, as it were³, they stoop, they look down, and curiously pry into the mysteries

¹ Eph. iii. 10.

² Παράκλησις.

³ 1 Pet. ii. 12.

ries of grace : the allusion is thought to be to the *cherubim* over the mercy-seat, which looked to one another, and both to the mercy-seat, the type of Christ, the propitiation and ransom of his people. Nor is this the invention of men ; could all mankind have been summoned together, and had ever so long a time allowed them to have found out a proper ransom for them, it would ever have remained a puzzling question to them, *how should man be just with God* ^m? or who will be a propitiation or ransom for him? for they could never have thought of the Son of God as a ransom ; it could never have entered into their hearts to conceive it ; for if the world by wisdom knew not God, it could never, with all its wisdom, find out a way of reconciling themselves unto God ; and we see what fooleries the heathens have gone into, being left to the dim light of nature, and without a revelation, in order to make the deity propitious to them : and even when this scheme of redemption and salvation by Christ is declared, it is treated by carnal men with contempt and ridicule ; *we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness* ^a ; and therefore this can never be an invention of man's : no, it is the invention of God himself ; *all things are of him*, and especially in a way of grace, and particularly our reconciliation, and the scheme

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^m Job, ix. 2.

^a 1 Cor. i. 23.

of it. *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself* °; drawing the scheme of their reconciliation, ransom, and redemption: this flows from his divine counsels, who does all things *after the counsel of his will*; as there was a consultation held about the formation of man, no doubt there was one about his ransom and recovery; and which, with great propriety, may be called the *council of peace*; that was held between the eternal three on this special affair: this is the fruit and effect of his infinite wisdom, which shines in all his works, but abounds in the ransom and redemption of men, and the contrivance of it; this is the manifold wisdom of God, the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, ordained before the world for our glory; this is the result of an eternal purpose he purposed in Christ, of a resolution and determination he came into to have mercy on his people, and save them by the Lord their God; whom he set forth in his decrees and purposes to be the propitiation for their sins, and fore-ordained before the foundation of the world to ransom them with his precious blood. This is owing to a covenant of grace, which he made with Christ, in which he called and appointed him *to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel*; and in consideration of his making his soul an offering for sin, and giving him-
self

self a ransom for his chosen, he promised him a numerous seed, length of days for ever and ever, and the utmost prosperity and glory as man and mediator; to all which he agreed, and said, *lo I come to do thy will*^p; which was no other than to give his life a ransom for many. And now it was with the utmost pleasure, and to his great satisfaction, that he found such a ransom; and which seems to be expressed in the language of the text, *I have found a ransom*; Christ, as such, was the object of his delight and joy when he was set up as mediator by him from everlasting. But this must be understood of God the Father, not to the exclusion of the Son^q, since *the council of peace was between them both*^r; and Christ is, as the *Septuagint* version of *Is. ix. 6.* calls him *the angel of the great council*; and he is the *wisdom of God* that dwells with *prudence*, and finds out the *knowledge of witty inventions*^s; of which this of the ransom and redemption of men is not the least. And especially if the finding a ransom respects the impetration of redemption^t; this peculiarly belongs to Christ; of him it is said, *having obtained*, or as it is in the original text, *having found eternal redemption*.

^p *Mat. xlix. 5, 6. and liii. 10, 11, 12. Ps. xl. 7.*

^q *Verum recte de utroque, patre & filio, id dicitur, tanquam veris auctoribus consilii de nostra redemptione. Joh. Henr. Michaelis notæ uberiores in loc.*

^r *Zech. vi. 13.*

^s *Prov. viii. 12.*

^t *So Cocceius interprets it.*

tion for us^a; he is the ransom, and the ransom-price; he is the man the peace, and who has made peace by the blood of his cross, and reconciled men to God by his sufferings and death, and is become the author of eternal salvation. But I go on to consider,

II. The happy effect and consequence of the ransom found, which is an order for deliverance from going down to the pit. And here I shall enquire what pit this is, a deliverance from going down to which is here ordered; and then by whom this order is given, and to whom directed.

I. By the *pit* is commonly understood the grave, and which in this book, and elsewhere, is so called; the word signifies *corruption*, and it has this name from hence, because in it the bodies of men putrify and corrupt: but the grave is what all men go down into; it is the house appointed for all living; it is man's long home, to which he is going, and where he must lodge till the resurrection: all men by divine appointment die, and are brought to the grave, and there laid; good men as well as bad men, such as are ransomed by Christ as well as others. It is true indeed that saints are delivered from it as a punishment; death is abolished, and the grave destroyed, as penal evils; but then they are not delivered from death itself, and from going down

^a *Ευαγγ.*, Heb. ix. 12;

down into the grave itself; they may have a reprieve for a time, and be spared a while longer; the sick man may recover strength before he goes hence and is no more; he may not be given over to death, tho' sorely chastened; this sickness he labours under may not be unto death; he may be restored and return when he has been brought to the gates of it: but then such an ordinary event as the recovery of a sick man, seems to be too small a matter to be founded upon such an extraordinary and marvellous affair as the ransom of Christ, and does not answer the grand design of it; rather therefore by this pit is meant the bottomless pit, the pit of destruction, - which the wicked go into, even hell, eternal wrath and ruin^v; and which, though the elect of God are deserving of as others, yet being ransomed by Christ, they are delivered from it. I proceed to enquire,

2. By whom, and to whom is this order given. Those who think the grave is intended by the pit, suppose these words, *deliver him from going down to it*, are addressed either to the disease itself the sick man is afflicted with; so Mr. Broughton renders the words, *spare him (O killing malady) from descending into the pit*; diseases are the servants of God, they come when he bids them, and they depart when he orders them so to do:

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^v *Ne descendat in foveam, infernalem ac æternam perniciem. Michael. not. in loc.*

he sometimes says to them, as he did to the destroying angel, *it is enough*; the ends are answered for which the malady was sent, and it must be continued no longer; often so it is, that upon the sick man's prayers, or those of his friends, he is raised up from his sick-bed, and delivered from the grave: or else the address is to the minister, as others think^z, that attends the sick man, assists him, and prays for him; who is sent to tell him that he shall not die but live, as *Nathan* was sent to *David*, and *Isaiab* to *Hezekiah*, which is declaratively, tho' not authoritatively, delivering from the grave: but the words are rather an address of God the Father to his Son, the angel and interpreter with him, lying in his bosom; upon finding the ransom, upon the contrivance of the scheme of redemption, after the agreement and covenant made; sending him forth in the fulness of time, to give himself a ransom for his people, and redeem and save them from destruction, since such a way was found out and agreed upon; for the words may be rendred, *redeem him from going down to the pit*, as the word signifies^y; and to whom can this be so properly said as to Christ the redeemer?

OR

^z So the *Dutch* annotators, and *Caryll* in loc.

^y פָּרַע is the same with פָּדָה, as *Jarchi* and *Aben Ezra* observe. Utrumque consignat *redemptionem*, vel liberationem captivi, quæ sit soluto pretio, vel & substituta anima loco animæ, vita loco vitæ. Nunquam aliter suo לָפַד utuntur Arabes. *Sebuliens* in loc.

or else this is the address of the Father to law and justice, upon the ransom being found, or the redemption obtained by Christ; since that is done, justice, let this man go free; law, set open thy prison-doors, and no longer detain this captive; hell and death, give up your claim to him, seeing the ransom-price is paid for him. Or these words may be considered as the words of the Son to the Father, the angel, the messenger and interpreter with God, the advocate with him; who appears in the presence of God for his people, and pleads his propitiatory sacrifice for them; urges on their behalf the atonement he has made, and the ransom he has given for them, and insists upon their deliverance from wrath and ruin; and declares it to his heavenly Father as his will, that they be saved from hell, and *be with him in heaven, where he is, and behold his glory*². I come now to the last general head,

III. To observe the grace of God displayed in all this, *then he is gracious, and saith*; not the minister that assists the sick person, and has pity on him, and prays for him; but either the angel, the messenger, the interpreter, one among a thousand, the Word that is with God, the advocate with the Father, who is gracious and merciful to his ransomed ones; and has in a very wonderful manner
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² John xvii. 24.

shewn his grace and love in becoming a surety for them ; engaging to be their saviour and redeemer ; promising to pay their debts for them, and to be their ransom, and give himself a ransom-price for them : the grace of Christ is well known, and clearly seen in his assumption of human nature, taking part of the same flesh and blood with his children, appearing in the form of a servant, who was Lord of all, and becoming poor, who was rich, even God over all, blessed for ever ; and greater love than this could never be expressed by men, than to lay down life for a friend ; but such is the grace of Christ, that he has laid down his life for his enemies, and died for men while they were sinners, and had no love for him : and his grace is further displayed in his wonderful and prevalent intercession for them ; for their conversion ; for the application of pardoning grace to them ; for the preservation of them from all evil ; for their final perseverance ; for their deliverance from hell and death ; and for their eternal glorification. Or rather the *He* here is God the Father^a, who is said to be *gracious*, and is so ; he has *proclaimed* his name in Christ, *a God gracious and merciful, abundant in goodness and truth, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin^b* ; he is the God of all grace, and has in various ways manifested

^a • עֹמֵם *the place*, he who fills up all space and place, so *Jarchi* and *Aben Ezra*.

^b • *Exod.* xxxiv. 6, 7.

fested his grace unto the sons of men, and especially in the affair of their ransom, redemption and salvation. His grace appears in finding Christ the ransom; for tho' this was the invention of wisdom, it was grace set wisdom at work to contrive the amazing scheme; it was because God loved his people with an everlasting love, and as an instance of that love, chose them to be holy and happy, and resolved upon their eternal salvation, that he cast about in his infinite mind to find out and pursue the best ways and means of effecting it; it was wondrous grace in him to send his Son to be the ransom and ransom-price, when wisdom could find none so fit and proper for this purpose as he; it was marvellous grace to agree to part with him, and in the fulness of time to send him to redeem lost sinners from sin, satan, law, death and hell: herein he shewed forth his grace, yea the riches, the fulness of his grace, even the exceeding riches of it in this instance of kindness; sending his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sacrifice for sin, to make atonement for it, and be the ransom of his people: herein his love was manifested to the highest degree, and he gave the greatest commendation of it that could be; for a greater person could not be sent, or a greater gift bestowed: if it was an instance of the love of God to his people the Jews, that he gave *Egypt* for their ransom, *Ethiopia* and

Seba for them; men for them, and people for their life^e; how much greater proof of his love has he given, by not sparing his own Son, but delivering him up for us all? had he given all the angels in heaven, and all the rest of mankind on earth a ransom for his chosen, it would not have been such an evidence of his love as the gift of his Son. And then, when Christ had given his life a ransom, it was grace to accept of this ransom-price in the room and stead of his people; for tho' it was a full and sufficient one, which law and justice could not object unto, and with which they must be both pleased and satisfied; yet God was not obliged to accept of it in the room and stead of sinful men, had he not voluntarily agreed in the covenant of grace to accept of it as a vicarious sacrifice and proper atonement for them; otherwise he might have insisted upon satisfaction from the sinner himself; but such was his grace, that he accepts the ransom of his Son in his room. Moreover, the grace of God is greatly displayed in what he has done upon the score of this ransom-price paid, and redemption obtained, in the justification of the persons, and in the pardon of the sins of those for whom it is given: justification proceeds upon, and is through the redemption which is in Christ; and this is an act of God's free grace; so says the apostle^d, *being justified*

^e Is. xliii. 3, 4.

^d Rom. iii. 24.

freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; it is with a view to the righteousness of Christ, and to his life and blood being given as a ransom for his people, and to the redemption thereby procured, that God justifies any, and this is by his grace; and as if to say so was not enough to express the riches of it, it is said to be freely by his grace; not only the righteousness of God, his strict justice is declared, in this method of justifying sinners, whereby he appears to be just, strictly just, whilst he is the justifier of him that believes in Jesus; but the free grace of God is abundantly manifest in it, in accepting the righteousness of Christ, in the imputation of it to his people where it works, and in the application of it by his Spirit: hence it is called the free gift, the gift of grace, and an abundance of grace: so likewise forgiveness of sin is a branch of redemption obtained by the ransom-price; hence, says the apostle, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace; though pardon of sin is through the blood of Christ shed for it, and with respect to that is an act of justice, yet notwithstanding it is according to grace, and the riches of it; tho' it is upon the foot of satisfaction and atonement, yet it was grace that provided Christ
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* Rom. v. 15, 16, 17.

† Eph. i. 7.

the lamb for the burnt-offering; it was grace that sent him to make reconciliation for sin, and to shed his blood for the remission of it; and it was grace that accepted the expiatory sacrifice, and declares the sinner forgiven on account of it; and which makes application of the blood of Christ to the sinner's conscience for that purpose; and who becomes very sensible of the freeness of the grace of God, and of the multitude of his tender mercies in the forgiveness of his sins. In short, the whole of salvation, which flows from the ransom given, and is no other than a deliverance from going down to the pit, or from hell, wrath, and ruin, is entirely of grace, and not of works. God in judging men, does not proceed according to their works, but according to his own grace; it is not by works of righteousness which they have done, even the best, but by his abundant mercy and rich grace that he saves them, through the blood and righteousness of his Son, and the regeneration of the blessed Spirit; and to this it will be ascribed by all the saints throughout an endless eternity, when the constant acclamation will be, *grace, grace unto it.*

And thus have I endeavoured to open and improve this passage of scripture on this solemn occasion, as time would allow me. It may be expected I should now say something

thing concerning our deceased friend and brother. I am very sensible that he himself was very averse to encomiums of the dead at such seasons, and for my own part I have no inclination to them; I shall therefore say nothing of him in his civil and moral character; how he behaved in his family as a parent and master, you that are of it know full well; and how he behaved as a neighbour, you that were his neighbours can bear witness; I shall only say a few things as to his spiritual and eternal concerns. It pleased God to call him by his grace, and reveal his Son in him in his younger days; and as he knew it was his duty, with the mouth, to make confession unto salvation, as well as with the heart to believe unto righteousness, he very early gave up himself to this church of Christ, of which he was a member upwards of twenty-six years; and allowing for the common infirmities of life, his conversation, so far as known by us, was agreeable to the profession he made. I doubt not but that he had that true faith which works by love, to Christ and his people; a crucified Christ was precious to him, his blood, his righteousness, and all that belong to him; he loved him, his people, his gospel, and his ordinances; he was an humble christian, tender and compassionate to the poor, to whom he behaved very respectfully both by words and deeds; he had a very mean opinion of

himself, being very sensible of the corruption of his nature, and the plague of his heart, and of his deficiencies and imperfections in life: to this was owing the great reluctance with which he accepted the office of a deacon, as many of you well know, and for the same reason chose to officiate in it, only when pure necessity obliged him to it. In a visit to him in his late illness, which issued in death, he told me he had had some delightful views of eternal things, and his interest in them; and added, that he should be very ungrateful if he did not believe that Christ shed his blood for him: that passage of scripture being mentioned in conversation, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help* *; he observed, that these words had been of wonderful use to him at a certain time, and had yielded him abundance of spiritual consolation and strength; as indeed in a few words are expressed the destruction and salvation, the ruin and recovery of men. And though his disorder increasing rendered him afterwards very little conversible, yet by broken expressions, and various tokens and circumstances, he was judged to die comfortable; and no doubt but he is fallen asleep in Jesus, and will be one of those that he will bring with him. May you, his children that survive him tread in his steps, and imitate him in every thing
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* Hof. xiii. 9.

praise-worthy, civil, moral and religious; attend the means of grace, and may the Lord call you by it in his due time, that you may fear and serve your father's God, and fill up his place in the world and church. I shall close with a word or two by way of reflection on what has been said.

Since there is a ransom found and given, and God is gracious upon it, and has displayed his grace in such a wonderful manner, this may be an encouragement to sensible sinners, who are depressed with the guilt of sin to hope in him; *let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercyⁿ, and with him is plenteous redemption*: this being the case, there is no room nor reason for despair; *behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the worldⁱ*; look to a sin-bearing and sin-atoning saviour; his blood cleanses, and his righteousness justifies from all sin, and his sacrifice expiates all iniquity, and God for his sake forgives all trespasses. Hence true believers in Christ have great reason to rejoice and be glad, who know the ransom-price is given for them, and they are delivered upon it from deserved wrath and ruin: these ransomed ones may come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; and when faith is in exercise, and they have a comfortable view of their interest in the redeemer, they say as the apostle did^k, *we joy in God through*

^l Pl. cxxx. 7.

ⁱ John v. 29.

^k Rom. v. 11.

through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement: such have reason to adore and admire distinguishing grace, and to call upon their souls, and all within them, to bless the name of the Lord, for the forgiveness of their sins, the ransom of their souls, and the redemption of their lives from destruction; and the grace displayed in all this should teach and influence them to live soberly, righteously and godly in this evil world.



FINIS.

